

### **Remarks**

This is in response to the non-final Office Action mailed on June 13, 2006. Claims 25 and 41 are amended. Claims 25, 26, and 41-43 remain pending. Reconsideration and allowance are requested for the following reasons.

Claim 25 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Lo, U.S. Patent No. 6,520,192. This rejection is respectfully traversed, and reconsideration is requested for the following reasons.

Claim 25 recites a method for using a coupler including a U-shaped body with first and second surfaces including an overlap region therebetween defining a U-shaped spacing, and a first U-shaped fiber trough member. Claim 25 recites providing a terminal end of the first trough member coupled to the coupler, wherein the terminal end was inserted in a longitudinal direction into the U-shaped spacing defined by the coupler.

In contrast, Lo discloses an extensible positioning device for a shank of an umbrella. The device includes a fixing cylinder 4 that is threaded onto a cylinder 3 to adjust the position of an outer tube 1 relative to an inner tube 2 of a shank of the umbrella. See Lo, Figs. 2 and 3. Lo fails to disclose or suggest a coupler including U-shaped body with first and second surfaces including an overlap region therebetween defining a U-shaped spacing. For example, there is no suggestion that the fixing cylinder 4 disclosed by Lo includes a U-shaped spacing. Lo likewise fails to suggest a first U-shaped fiber trough member. For example, there is no suggestion that either of the cylindrical outer or inner tubes 1, 2 forms a U-shaped fiber trough member.

Reconsideration and allowance of claim 25, as well as claim 26 that depends therefrom, are therefore requested.

Claim 41 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Peck, U.S. Patent No. 2,360,159. This rejection is respectfully traversed, and reconsideration is requested for the following reasons.

Claim 41 recites releasing a locking element to release the first spring portion to release the terminal end of the first trough member without releasing the second spring portion holding the terminal end of the second trough member.

Peck discloses a conduit connector with springs (i.e., elastic leaves 7). However, Peck fails to disclose or suggest a locking element. Peck likewise fails to suggest releasing the

locking element to release the first spring portion to release the terminal end of the first trough member, as recited by claim 41.

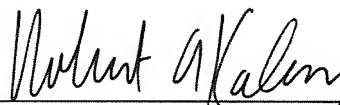
Reconsideration and allowance of claim 41 are therefore requested.

Claims 42 and 43 are allowed, and claim 26 is noted as being allowable. Applicants appreciate the Examiner's assistance in identifying allowable subject matter. All claims are in condition for allowance.

Favorable reconsideration in the form of a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. The Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned attorney with any questions regarding this application.

Respectfully submitted,  
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